



## Film Techniques

When you study a film, it is important that you understand the different types of techniques the film crew used to create what you see. When you discuss scenes and sequences, try to use the correct terms for the different kinds of shots and techniques which make up the scenes. This will show your markers that you understand not only what is happening in the film, but how particular scenes have been constructed to convey meaning to you.

### General Film Terminology

**Dialogue:** what is said by the characters in a film. Dialogue is written by screenwriters to tell the narrative (story) of the film.

**Director:** The person responsible for making the artistic decisions on a film.

**Flashback:** Scene or sequence to show a past event that is inserted into a present scene.

**Music:** Used to create the theme, mood or atmosphere of a film.

**Narrative:** The story in a film.

**Setting:** Where the action of a film takes place.

### Camera Shots and Angles

**Aerial Shot:** Camera shot taken from a high altitude such as a cherry picker, crane or plane. Often referred to as the 'God Shot'

**Camera Angles:** The angle of a camera can be high, low or at a tilt.

**Close up/extreme close-up:** A 'CU' or 'ECU' is a camera shot taken from only a short distance away. For example, a close up could be of a face, while an extreme close-up might show only an eye or part of a face.

**Establishing/panoramic shot:** A wide shot used to establish setting and atmosphere. Often used at the beginning of a film.

**Frame:** An individual photograph.

**Full shot:** Usually displays the whole height of the object or subject (eg. a full length body shot).

**High angle:** Taken with the camera looking down on the subject or object. Can be used to portray vulnerability.

**Long shot:** A shot taken from some distance away. Different to a panoramic shot, but still includes some scenery and the full height of subjects or objects.

**Low angle shot:** A shot taken from below the subject or object, looking upwards. This shot can be used to suggest dominance or power.

**Medium shot:** A shot in which the subject is viewed from the waist up only.

**Point of view shot:** A shot in which the camera acts as the eyes for the subject or object, enabling the audience to see the character's point of view.

**Tilt:** Movement of the camera, usually up or down.

**Zoom:** Similar to tracking shot, but the camera moves in closer to the subject or object.

### Terms of film analysis

**Metaphor:** A sequence that represents something else. For example, a road in the background of a scene might suggest a journey or new beginning.

**Symbolism:** An object or image that represents something beyond the literal. For example, winter trees might symbolize death, a crucifix might mean sacrifice or a door might be a symbol of entering new worlds.